

5 Components of a Fundraising Plan

Virtually all businesses, including nonprofits, need operating funds. As Peter McFarren puts it in the [“Components of a Fundraising Plan”](#) lesson, “You can run a business without profit, but you can’t run a business without cash flow. You need cash flow to be sustainable.”

If you want to launch or grow a nonprofit organization, consider developing a fundraising plan. Like a [business plan](#), a fundraising plan details how you intend to grow (or sustain) your organization while accounting for any challenges you may face along the way. Not only is a fundraising plan useful for securing funds from potential donors and/or grants, it also can help you think through some tough questions to ensure you are positioned to succeed.

So what goes into a fundraising plan? Below is an outline of the key components:

1. **Executive Summary:** A statement detailing the mission, vision, goals, and objectives of your organization. What is your overarching goal? What change(s) will your organization effect in the short-and long-term? How is it different from other nonprofit businesses in the space?
2. **Organizational Structure:** An overview of your organization’s legal, management, and financial structure. How does your organization operate on a day-to-day basis? Is your current setup sustainable, both from a financial and personnel perspective?
3. **Strategic Objectives:** A summary of measurable objectives (e.g., milestones) that correspond with your overarching goal, along with an explanation of how you intend to achieve them. How many people will your product or service serve, and by when? How will you measure progress?
4. **Timeline & Budget:** A list of your organization’s capital and operating expenses, fixed and variable costs, assets and liabilities. What funds are needed? What will they be used for? What is the return on investment that will result from your organization or project?
5. **Marketing:** A plan for how you intend to promote your nonprofit and make its mission and services (or products) known to your intended constituents as well as the general public. Who is your target audience? What are the best channels to communicate with them? Will you rely on a single spokesperson or a team of marketers?

If you’re having trouble answering some of the questions listed above, we recommend beginning with our resource on [Developing a Value Proposition](#) (1 MB) before proceeding with a fundraising plan.

Always remember that the purpose of a fundraising plan is to demonstrate that you have a strong vision and a carefully devised strategy, and have taken steps to minimize risk. As Mandela Washington Fellow Adepeju Jaiyeoba [said in her Facebook Live session](#), “People who give also want value for their money too...trust plays a key role in raising funds.”
